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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who alone spreads out the Heavens and rules the raging of the sea, thank you for the gift of life and for the opportunity to invest in freedom.

Lord, infuse our Senators with strength to meet the challenges of our time. Remind them that humility precedes honor and that service is the litmus test of greatness. May our lawmakers look to You throughout this day for guidance. Help them to remember that they are doing Your work and reward them from the reservoir of Your love.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 8, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Sen-

ator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Patrice H. Kunesh, of Minnesota, to be Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans, Department of Health and Human Services.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

FOX NEWS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, additional new evidence came to light that Rupert Murdoch and FOX News knew Donald Trump lied about the 2020 election. Yet they allowed the Big Lie to air on their network all the same. More and more evidence keeps pouring out that these are the undisputed facts.

I have never heard of a news organization push a story with such intensity

while acknowledging, very candidly behind the scenes, that what they were peddling was total balderdash.

In one email just revealed last night, Mr. Murdoch admitted sometime after January 6 that “maybe Sean and Laura went too far,” referring to prime-time hosts Sean Hannity and Laura Ingraham.

In another instance published in last night’s Washington Post, Mr. Murdoch speculated that after losing the election, Donald Trump was going “increasingly mad.” Murdoch said Donald Trump is going “increasingly mad,” and then Murdoch worried that President Trump’s allies’ plans to overturn swing State results “sound ridiculous” and could lead to “riots like never before.”

Murdoch, the head of FOX News, allowing these lies to continue, worries that they could lead to “riots like never before.”

But it is not enough for Mr. Murdoch to express doubt and regret in private, which is continuing to be documented, because today, after he makes these expressions of doubt and regret and is very pejorative of his own newscast and newscasters, the Big Lie still has a home at FOX News, Mr. Murdoch’s station—news network. Just look at Carlson’s segments this week.

Members on the Republican side of the aisle should drop the pretenses and say it plainly: FOX News lied to the country about the 2020 elections and, in doing so, eroded the public’s trust in American democracy. For their own sake and for the sake of the country, Mr. Murdoch and FOX News leadership should put a halt to the spread of the Big Lie on their network.

This is about preserving trust in our 200-year-old system of government. When enough people believe elections are not on the level, that is the death knell of democracy.

Of course, the fault also lies with the person who shared Capitol security footage with FOX News to begin with—

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Speaker MCCARTHY. Speaker MCCARTHY has held a gavel for less than 3 months and already he has done more than any party leader in Congress to enable the spread of Donald Trump's Big Lie.

While the Speaker can't undo his decision to share security footage with FOX News, he should denounce them for the way that FOX News manipulated that footage to rewrite the history of January 6. The Speaker should not delay because his decision to share sensitive security footage with FOX News has made our democracy weaker because millions—millions—of people, sadly, believe Mr. Carlson when he says January 6 was a legitimate protest. And the more people who believe that January 6 was legitimate, the more they will accept the lie that Donald Trump won the 2020 election.

Bewilderingly—bewilderingly—Speaker MCCARTHY said yesterday that he didn't regret his decision to share Capitol security footage. He said he didn't see what FOX News aired; that people can make their own conclusions. Then, for some reason, he started pointing the finger at CNN.

For Speaker MCCARTHY not even to watch the spoiled fruits of his labor, it shows a callousness and unconcern far beneath the dignity of his office.

Speaker MCCARTHY, rescue your office from that indignity by finally speaking out. If you are dealing with a burglar, Speaker MCCARTHY, the last thing you should do is give them your house keys. If you are dealing with an arsonist, Speaker MCCARTHY, the last thing you should do is give them a box of matches. And if you are dealing with FOX News, Speaker MCCARTHY, the last thing you should do is give them security footage of January 6 because, as we have seen, their hosts will lie to the American people—baldly lie about what happened.

So, once again, Speaker MCCARTHY can't undo his decision to share security footage with FOX, but he should at least denounce FOX News for the way they have manipulated the footage to rewrite the history of January 6.

THE BUDGET

Mr. President, now on the budget, President Biden's budget won't be released until midday tomorrow, but we can already draw a couple of big conclusions about the contrast between his vision—the Democratic vision—and the Republican vision for our country.

The President, for instance, is willing to do what Republicans are not: lower the deficit in a realistic, responsible way without cutting benefits that tens of millions of people rely on.

In fact, Democrats have already proved it is possible: The Inflation Reduction Act not only saved families money, it also lowers the deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars.

The Republicans like to talk about cutting the debt, but Democrats are the ones actually getting it done. Unlike Republicans, the President is also asking the richest of the rich to pay a

little more of their fair share in taxes so that tens of millions of Americans will not see their Medicare benefits wither away in a few years. Under the President's plan, Medicare would remain solvent well beyond 2050. Isn't that great? Medicare, which we have always worried about, which is so important to tens of millions of Americans, would stay solvent until 2050.

Republicans, of course, want to go the other way. Instead of cutting taxes for the middle class, their priority is tax cuts to billionaires and large corporations. Now, I have no problem with those at the very top. God bless them. They are doing just fine. But I think most Americans agree that CEOs should never have a lower tax burden than nurses, teachers, cabdrivers, firefighters, and police officers. If my friends on the other side want to call that outlandish or extreme, they can go right ahead, but I warn them they will be at odds with the vast majority of Americans.

Finally, the President's plan will build on what Democrats accomplished last year to lower the cost of prescription drugs.

For the first time ever, Medicare now has the authority to negotiate the price of certain drugs, saving taxpayers billions of dollars, but the President is right to push further in expanding the list of drugs whose prices Medicare can negotiate.

So let's run through the list one more time. The President's plan is going to continue lowering the cost of prescription drugs. He is going to ensure that Medicare remains solvent beyond 2050, without cutting a penny in benefits. He is going to ask the wealthy to pay just a little more of their fair share in taxes without raising taxes on anyone making less than \$400,000 a year. And his plan will cut the deficit by \$2 trillion—\$2 trillion—over the next 10 years.

Speaker MCCARTHY, what about you? Where is your plan? Enough with the dodging. Enough with the excuses. It is time to level with the American people so they can see the contrast between Democrats and Republicans for themselves.

RAIL SAFETY

Now, Mr. President, on rail, yesterday, the NTSB announced the opening of a special investigation into Norfolk Southern's organization and safety culture in light of multiple derailments, including the toxic derailment in East Palestine last month.

When Norfolk Southern's CEO, Alan Shaw, comes before the Senate tomorrow, I expect him to own up to his company's spotty safety culture, particularly the increasingly apparent pattern of negligence, because you don't need a full investigation to understand that when rail companies willingly neglect safety upgrades, push for looser regulations, and lay off workers, they are asking for disaster.

So, tomorrow, I want to hear from Norfolk Southern's CEO as to why they

spent years lobbying for looser regulations designed to prevent accidents like this, particularly when Trump was President. After seeing a record \$3.3 billion in profits last year, I want to hear why Norfolk Southern chose to prioritize billions in stock buybacks instead of investing in safety equipment or their workers.

I also expect Mr. Shaw to lay out precisely what steps Norfolk Southern is taking to prevent future disasters like East Palestine. How does Norfolk Southern plan to address rail safety inspections in the future? Will Norfolk Southern commit to having its conductors and other rail employees undergo additional safety and response training? And if, God forbid, another accident happens, how will Norfolk Southern ensure communities get the resources they need to respond to accidents?

These are questions that Mr. Shaw must answer tomorrow: how the railroad will address rail safety inspections in the future, whether they will commit to having their conductors and rail employees undergo additional safety and response training, and how they will help communities if, God forbid, another accident occurs.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER

Finally, Mr. President, there is Andrew Lloyd Webber. Today, it is my honor to pay tribute to one of the world's alltime greatest composers, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber.

This month, Mr. Lloyd Webber will turn 75 just as his latest musical, "Bad Cinderella," opens at the Imperial Theatre on Broadway. Boy, it takes your breath away just thinking about his amazing, amazing career. Just listen to this: "The Phantom of the Opera," "Cats," "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," "Evita"—all done by just one man. These works stand the test of time already.

For those of us in New York, Mr. Lloyd Webber has often been called the backbone of Broadway, and thank God, because New York would not be the same without Broadway.

It has been a hard time for the performing arts in recent years, and I was proud to work in the Senate to pass Save our Stages, which has provided over \$1 billion to thousands of theaters, music venues, jazz and comedy clubs, and more in New York and across our entire country. And allies like Mr. Lloyd Webber have been outstanding to keep the arts going when times have gotten tough.

So, Sir Andrew Lloyd, we wish you a happy 75th. Thank you for everything you have done for our great city and for culture and music in the world, and we just can't wait to see what you have in store for us next.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.